

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



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ARTHUR R. MARSHALL, LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Refuge Closes Compartment C for Two Months

Management Compartment C of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge will be closed for a minimum of two months starting Monday, October 14, 2002. The reason for this closure is the beginning of construction of the LILA (Loxahatchee Impoundment Landscape Assessment) project. The LILA project is a joint partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and directly relates to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The LILA project will enable scientists to create Everglades habitat such as tree islands, sawgrass ridges, and sloughs, and study their relationship to water flows. For the next two months, SFWMD contractors will begin the earth moving process to construct four small impoundments (15 acres each) called “macrocosms” from the two existing impoundments. Contractors will also install a pump and levee in Impoundment 1 so that water can be recirculated among the impoundments.

Visiting public will be able to utilize the Marsh Trail parking lot to access two sections of the Marsh Trail. The public can head west from the parking lot to the center canal and then will have to stop and turn around. The public will also be allowed to travel south on the eastern levee of Impoundment 7 to the corner of the impoundment and then have to turn around. The public is being advised that they will see heavy equipment in the Management Compartment C area and to heed the barricades for their own safety and protection. When the heavy construction phase of the project is over the public will be allowed to not only walk the entire Marsh Trail but also observe the work that will be done by SFWMD scientists in the nearby impoundment dedicated to the ten year LILA project. For more information, please call the Visitor Center at (561) 734-8303 or visit our website Loxahatchee.fws.gov or find out more about the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) at www.evergladesplan.org.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving,

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protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of 538 national wildlife refuges. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fish and wildlife management offices, and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

The Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System in 2003 marks the 100th anniversary of the world's largest network of lands and waters set aside to protect wildlife. From its beginnings at Florida's tiny Pelican Island, the Refuge System has grown to encompass hundreds of unique, spectacular and truly wild places that harbor diverse species and welcome more than 35 million visitors each year. To learn more, point your browser to <http://refuges100.fws.gov>.